

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown below. A complete listing of the claims, including their current status identifier, is set forth below.

1. (**Currently Amended**) A method comprising:
contacting a hepatitis C virus (HCV) **NS4B** nucleotide binding motif (NBM)
polypeptide **NS4B protein** with a candidate agent **and HCV RNA; and**
determining an effect of said candidate agent ~~on~~ **on:**
(i) a GTPase activity or a nucleotide binding activity of said NS4B protein
polypeptide; and
(ii) an HCV RNA binding activity of said NS4B protein.
~~determining an effect of said candidate agent on replication of HCV.~~

2-5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said candidate agent is a nucleotide analog.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said nucleotide analog is a non-hydrolysable nucleotide.

8. (Canceled).

9. (**Currently Amended**) The method of **claim 24**, ~~claim 1~~, wherein said HCV is a subgenomic or full length HCV replicon.

10. (**Currently Amended**) The method of **claim 24**, ~~claim 1~~ wherein said method comprises determining an effect of said candidate agent on HCV replication in a huh7 cell.

11-21. (Canceled)

22. **(Currently Amended)** The method of ~~claim 24, claim 1~~ wherein said method comprises assaying said candidate agent on HCV replication in a liver cell line or primary liver cell.

23. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 9, wherein said HCV is live virus or a replicon thereof.

24. **(New)** The method of claim 1, further comprising determining an effect of said candidate agent on replication of HCV.